



80318 - Laos
Project Fact Sheet 2022

Laos: Learning Through Listening

Overview

This project provides reading skills to people throughout Laos who have missed out on literacy education, contributing to individual and community growth and enabling better interaction with authorities. The literacy program also enables participants to read the Scriptures for their own personal growth and to more actively participate in church life.

The Need

Approximately 84.7 percent of the 7.5 million people in Laos are considered literate. While the enrolment ratio and attendance rate for primary school students is high, secondary school attendance drops radically to around 42 per cent. There is also disparity between the literacy levels of men (90 per cent) and women (79.4 per cent) across the country. The Lao people group represent 55 per cent of the population and have good access to education.

However, the other 45 per cent of the population is composed of ethnic minorities who often live in remote mountain areas. This typically hinders access to education, resulting in a very low literacy rate for minorities.

This project aims at reaching out to this neglected population and the underprivileged in Laos.



Project Goals

This project has been established as a response to the needs of churches who wish to teach their non-literate members to read the Bible. This program uses the Bible and a textbook to teach literacy skills, while a local church volunteer conducts the classes, with the help of an audio device that dictates the lessons.

The Laos Partnership within Bible Society is working closely with Bible Society Cambodia on implementing the literacy project. They also work closely with the churches in Laos, who host and run the classes.

Each year the goal is to start 150-200 classes with 1,500-2,500 students, in the national language, Lao. There is a currently a long waiting list in local churches for members who want to be part of the program, so the need for more classes is clear.

In 2022, as well as starting new classes, the year will be a time of evaluation. The team will run evaluation sessions to determine the impact of the project and to develop the most appropriate materials for learning.

Impact

In recent years, Bible Society has achieved an annual distribution of over 1,500 New Testaments, 6,000 new reader Bible portions and 6,000 children's Bible portions to those who participate in the classes, and other members of the community who may be impacted by this project in their area. In 2022, the team plans to meet to develop 10 new Bible stories for the program.

This will increase the capacity of the project to impact and advance the skills of participants with the Bible. Significant impact is seen as people from ethnic minorities gain literacy skills. Literate adults are able to read the Bible and become better equipped to contribute to their communities and to church life.

Testimonies

"Now, by the grace of God, I can read and write, and I am so happy and proud of myself. Now I can read and understand the Bible. My reading ability really benefits me with biblical knowledge and helps me to understand God's word. Being able to read also helps me to understand the meaning of the notices and letters that I receive and the signs and posters in the markets and on the streets."

- Mrs. N, Northern Laos

Prayer Needs

- Pray for the livelihood of the Laotians, as they are struggling with the impact of COVID-19.
- Pray that the churches and facilitators would inspire the students to attend classes consistently and focus their attention towards learning.
- Pray that churches will be motivated to run literacy programs as part of their outreach to both believers and unbelievers.
- Please pray that local authorities in rural areas will allow classes to take place, as there can be restrictions on Christian activity.